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Krzysztof SKUBISZEWSKI **POLAND**
(Phonetic: skoobeeZHEHVskee)

Minister of Foreign Affairs
(since 1989)

Addressed as: Mr. Minister

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Krzysztof Skubiszewski has held his current position in all four of Poland's post-Communist governments. A highly distinguished professor and political independent, he has a breadth of knowledge and experience that is probably unmatched among the current crop of Polish officials. His tenure as one of the country's top diplomats has not suffered under the coalition government of Prime Minister Hanna Suchocka;

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Skubiszewski would have been invited even if he was no longer Foreign Minister. With Skubiszewski and Defense Minister Janusz Onyszkiewicz as part of a seasoned team,

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Poland to pursue a step-by-step merger with Western security structures, rather than a headlong push for outright membership; integration into, instead of protection from, Western market economies; and cultivation of good relations with Poland's neighbors to the east.

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The Foreign Minister apparently has had a benefactor in President Lech Walesa; he reportedly was retained as Foreign Minister by then Premier Jan Olszewski in December 1991 at the President's insistence.

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The Foreign Minister reportedly objected to Walesa's plans to expand the presidential office to include secretariats and departments, which correspond to the ministries.

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the Foreign Ministry is sometimes overlooked in the President's policy deliberations.

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A Consummate Professional

Skubiszewski has been described as calm and informal during negotiations and given to concise and focused statements.

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he ably assisted Walesa during a July 1991 visit to NATO Headquarters by providing comprehensive and elegant elaborations of Walesa's sometimes cryptic foreign policy pronouncements.

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Skubiszewski never raised his voice, was always polite, and apologized "if he was even two minutes late."

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Skubiszewski has written on international organizations, Polish-German border issues, and military law. He

speaks fluent German and Oxford English, and has a good command of French. During the Open Skies conference he spontaneously translated part of his presentation into French. He is not married.

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Looking to Bonn

Skubiszewski has been particularly attentive to bilateral relations with Germany. In July, he persuaded German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel to visit in order to discuss border issues, possible German sponsorship of closer Polish relations with the EC, and increased financial investment in Poland's privatization efforts. [redacted] Skubiszewski also invested much of his personal prestige in drawing up a treaty with Germany that was ratified by the Sejm (lower house of parliament) in October 1991. He has since praised Germany's supporting role during Poland's association agreement negotiations with the EC. [redacted]

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Security Policy Issues

Skubiszewski has devoted much of his attention to developing security ties to NATO and the West but has frequently said that Warsaw is not considering a formal relationship with the Alliance. He has made developing relations with the former Soviet republics another priority; he is reported to be opposed, however, to expanding the consultative troika of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia to include Ukraine or other former republics. On the other hand, Skubiszewski has had no objection to Ukraine's increasing its ties to the rest of Europe; he has expressed support for Ukrainian membership in the Council of Europe. The Foreign Minister said in press interviews that Poland will transfer its good relations with Czechoslovakia to relations with the independent Czech and Slovak Republics once they are officially in existence. [redacted]

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Recently, at a meeting of the CSCE council, Skubiszewski concluded that European and transatlantic institutions such as CSCE proved inefficient in preventing and resolving conflicts and eliminating security risks. His solution to combating these was a stronger negotiating role for the institutions, more use of conflict prevention and resolution instruments, and a more efficient decisionmaking process. Skubiszewski also suggested the peacekeeping missions be financed from the defense budgets of the participating countries. [redacted]

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Lifetime Academic

Skubiszewski was born on 10 August 1926 into a wealthy and educated Poznan family. He is a graduate of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. A highly respected professor of international law, he lectured at the University of Geneva in 1961 and at the University of London in 1963. Skubiszewski attended Harvard in the late 1950s on a Ford Foundation grant and was awarded an LL.M. In 1964 he reportedly did research at Columbia on the UN General Assembly. [redacted]

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Skubiszewski is an acknowledged expert on Polish-German relations. During 1981-84 he was a member of Cardinal Jozef Glemp's Social Council on the Polish – West German forum. In 1989 he was the architect of a highly successful campaign to include Poland in the German reunification process. During the February 1990 Open Skies conference, then Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze consulted him on the issue on two or three occasions. [redacted]

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22 December 1992

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